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Housekeepers' Chat

Release Tuesday, May 13, 1930

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "More About Herbs for an Old-Fashioned Garden." Information from W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, U. S. D. A.

Publications available: "Sun Suits for Children," and "Canaries, Their Care and Management," and F.B. 1269, "Celery Growing."

--ooOoo--

Before I continue, with W.R.B.'s pointers on growing parsley, and so forth, I must read a letter which came this morning, from a friend who heard my talk yesterday.

"Dear Aunt Sammy," she writes, "I know a bank whereon the garden thyme grows. Your talk brought up such a vivid image of it that I can all but get the fragrance, and hear the bees droning over it. One of my friends has a beautiful summer place in New Hampshire -- a place which has been in the family for more than a hundred years. Recently, it has been restored, so that inside and out, it looks much as it did a century ago, except for electric lights, modern plumbing, and such. The house sets back a bit from the road, with a low terrace and lawn. Along the edge of the terrace, which is supported by a stone wall, is a border of thyme. All summer long, it is covered with little pink spikes of flowers, and they fringe out at the edge a little, over the gray rocks. A most enchanting place."

Isn't that a pleasing letter? I must show it to W.R.B. The first thing I asked him about the other day was parsley, since parsley is so generally used for flavoring, and as a garnish.

W.R.B. says that sometimes it is a little difficult to get parsley plants started, but if the seed is fresh, and if we keep the soil carefully watered until the plants are up, we will have no trouble. Six or eight plants are usually enough for home use. Parsley is a biennial -- that is, it produces seed the second season, so it's best to start new plants every year.

The Garden Specialist says it's a good plan to have the parsley growing in a coldframe. Then a sash may be placed over it in the fall of the year, and we'll have a supply of leaves all winter if the weather is reasonably mild. Last fall I transplanted three or four parsley plants to a box of good soil, and kept it in the kitchen all winter. There are about a half dozen different kinds of parsley, one known as "turnip-rooted" parsley. Both the roots and tops of this plant are used for flavoring soups.

W.R.B. mentioned colory and celery seed, too, both of which are used for flavoring soups, and other dishes. Celery seed can be bought at the grocery store, or left-over seed may be bought from a seed dealer.

As for celery itself, W.R.B. says he believes that very few people appreciate the real value of this plant, either for flavoring or for cooking as a vegetable. I hastened to remind him that there are at least two recipes for celery in the radio cookbook -- Celery Fritters and Creamed Celery.

"I know it," said my friend. "My wife has tried them both, and they are very good. But I still maintain that few people appreciate celery. Do you know that celery leaves may be chopped fine, just like parsley, and sprinkled over meats? They give an especially nice flavor.

"And I wonder if you have ever used the flowers and the green seed pods of the common nasturtium, in your salads, and for flavoring. If you want something that would tempt the gods, make a fruit salad, and add a few fresh-blown nasturtium flowers. Or select a few of the very tender seed pods, chop them fine, and mix them with your salad.

"Of course you have heard about caper sauce, which is made from the true caper. A very good substitute for caper sauce is made from the seed-pods and tender young seeds of the nasturtium.

"Now," concluded W.R.B., "I have covered the more important herbs for growing in our gardens, but have said nothing about anise, sweet marjoram, mustard, watercress, and a dozen others, all of which might well be grown in the old-fashioned garden. I might suggest that watercress is not at all difficult to grow. It can be started from seed sown on rich soil, or from rooted plants, preferably in a cold frame. Water it every day. Watercress will grow only in soils having plenty of lime. In fact, where it is grown commercially, the water comes from limestone springs, and is heavily charged with calcium carbonate, which is the lime in its natural state. By adding a teacupful of lime to a pail of water, and applying this to the watercress about once a week, or even once in two or three weeks, the soil will be kept in the proper condition for growing cress. However, cress grown in beds should be shaded when the weather is extremely hot. Cress can also be grown in small tanks or ponds, if you add a little lime to the water, and keep it fresh. Cress grows naturally in running water, or in ponds in which the water is constantly changing. Now, Aunt Sammy, if you or any of your listeners want to know more about herbs, or flavoring plants, I'll be glad to answer any questions," concluded W.R.B.

I told him he might hear from us, in a few days, and he promised to see that every letter is answered.

Which reminds me that I have a few questions of my own, today, left over from last week. A good many mothers have asked how to make sun suits, for little girls and for little boys, and how to make hats which protect the eyes from hot sunshine. Instead of answering these questions, I have been mailing copies of the Sun Suit leaflet. In it, you will find directions for making

various kinds of suits and hats. "Sun Suits for Children" is the name of this popular leaflet.

The next question is about canaries. That's answered in the Bulletin, "Canaries-- Their Care and Management."

Next question: "Do you have any recipes for cooking lamb?"

My goodness, this must be from a brand new listener! Here I have been talking about lamb, and broadcasting recipes for lamb, and referring to the Lamb leaflet, for these many moons. Yes indeed, there is an excellent leaflet on lamb -- "Lamb As You Like It." This leaflet includes a list of relishes, a list of vegetables, and a list of salads to serve with lamb. The recipes include Roast Leg of Lamb, Broiled Lamb Chops, Roast Saddle of Lamb, Savory Brown Gravy, Mint Sauce, Roast Stuffed Shoulder of Lamb, Mint or Watercress Stuffing, Roast Stuffed Breast of Lamb, Forcemeat Stuffing, Lamb Stew, and Curry of Lamb.

And the illustrations! If you could see the pictures of some of these dishes -- well, you'd want to do more than <u>look</u> at the dishes.

While we are on the subject -- do you know that there are two other popular meat leaflets? "Cooking Beef According to the Cut" and "Pork in Preferred Ways." Three, I should have said -- for there's the new leaflet on "Reindeer Recipes," for those who have a chance to try reindeer meat.

Tomorrow: "Should Children be Seen and Not Heard?"

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